

WILLIAM LAUD AND SCOTLAND

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BEFORE we can appreciate with discrimination Archbishop Laud's relation to Scotland, it is necessary to remind ourselves what precisely his admirers claim that he achieved for the Church of England. May I lay before you what seem the two most representative favourable verdicts? One is practically contemporary—the summing up, by his former chaplain, Dr. Heylin, in his *Cyprianus Anglicus*: “If we look into the Church as it stood under his direction, we shall find the Prelates generally more intent upon the work committed to them, more earnest to reduce this Church to the ancient Orders, than in former times; the Clergy more obedient to the commands of their *Ordinaries*, joining together to advance the work of *Uniformity* recommended to them; the Liturgy more punctually executed in all the parts and offices of it; the Word more diligently preached, the Sacraments more reverently administered, than in some scores of years before; the people more conformable to those Reverend Gestures in the House of God which, though prescribed before, were but little practised; more cost laid out upon the beautifying and adorning of Parochial Churches, in furnishing and repairing Parsonage-houses, than at, or in all the times since, the Reformation: the Clergy grown to such esteem, for parts and power, that the Gentry thought none of their Daughters to be better disposed of than such as they had lodged in the Arms of a Church-man; and the Nobility grown so well affected to the State of the Church, that some of them designed their younger sons to the Order of Priesthood, to make them capable of rising in the same *Ascendant*.”¹

From this somewhat naive 17th century eulogy, we turn to that pronounced (by Rev. C. H. Simpkinson) at the Archbishop Laud Commemoration in 1895. “This (viz., a sense of mission) is what marks off William Laud above all the famous ecclesiastics of that grand age, the saintly Andrewes, the politic Williams, the industrious Harsnet, the devout Cosin, the eloquent Calamy, the affectionate Baxter, as the one greatest man among them all, who had something to do and who did it, and who sealed it gladly with his blood, leaving a work behind him (which has lasted already 250 years)—our beloved Church of England, Apostolic and liberal, devout and full of missionary zeal, national in organisation, and

¹ *Cyprianus Anglicus*. London, 1671. p. 237.

oecumenical in sympathy ; so cautious to preserve all the ornaments which the long struggles of history have won, yet boldly stripping off the chains of that strange Roman slavery which, for a time, seemed even to great and good minds the necessary condition for success."¹

It will be observed that three things stand out from these eulogies, the improved discipline of the Church, the rise in status of churchmen, and the enrichment of worship, retaining much of the mediaeval reverential splendour, while emphatically repudiating Rome. All three can be plausibly attributed to Laud, though each of them deserves a closer scrutiny. He was indubitably a disciplinarian—the most unbending, indeed, in the history of the modern Church. He gloried in the efficiency of “these two able governors praemium and poena”²—praemium in the shape of the speedy promotion of willing agents, poena in the form of fines and imprisonments, and the indefensible practice of bodily mutilations. At his trial, he objected to the actions of the Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission being charged against him, but in all the most notorious of their sentences he was the moving spirit. He revived, amid much opposition, particularly from the See of Lincoln, the right of the Metropolitan to make visitations of the dioceses in his province, adducing Mediaeval precedent as his warrant. Before his day, many local variations had grown up in the celebration of public worship : Laud would have none. A disciplinarian certainly ; but was he a sound one ? Was the Uniformity he sought according to the recognised Canons of the Church ? It would be hard to justify this claim, as will appear a little later. Burton, who was set in the pillory and had his ears cropped, uttered, in the sermon for which he was condemned, one very penetrating remark, that Laud “had a Papal infallibility of spirit, whereby, as by a Divine Oracle, all Questions in Religion are finally determined.”³ It was not the element of discipline, but the fact that men felt that they were being dragooned according to the wayward standards of a dominant spirit backed by the Royal Prerogative, that led to his imprisonment and death.

Next, did he raise the status of churchmen ? In one sense, yes. Churchmen held a place in the Councils of Charles I that they had never attained since the Reformation. They filled many of the highest offices of State, and not without credit. There is one illuminating entry in Laud’s Diary for 1636. “Sunday, March 6 : William Juxon, Lord Bishop of London, made Lord High Treasurer of England. No Churchman

¹ *Archbishop Laud Commemoration*, 1895, ed. W. E. Collins, London, 1895. p. 131.

² Laud’s *Collected Works* (Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology), Oxford, 1847 ff. Vol. vii, p. 374.

³ *Cyprianus Anglicus*, p. 311.

had it since Henry VII's time ; I pray God bless him to carry it so that the Church may have honour, and the King and the State service and contentment by it. And now if the Church will not hold up themselves, under God I can doe no more."¹ The same tendency is apparent in Scotland under the Laudian regime, with Spottiswoode as Primate and Chancellor. There is no doubt that in this Laud was convinced that he was doing the Church a real service. As Prof. Mozley has pointed out in his Essay on Laud, he was haunted "by a sacerdotal political form of a Church in power, her orders nobility, her prelates pillars of the State."² But how, in point of fact, did it fare with their ecclesiastical duties ? It is a remarkable thing that, though at the moment, "bishopping" was being pressed in Scotland, I can find no trace in Laud's diary of his having ever conducted a Confirmation service.³ And while some of these civil appointments carried with them quite adequate emoluments, those Churchmen who looked forward to them had to haunt the Court in advance. This meant two things—considerable expenditure, and partial neglect of their cures. Pluralism was rampant. A disciplinarian like Laud might have been expected to deal with this evil. And one is led to expect it from his Diary where under June 19, 1621, we read, "His Majesty gave me the grant of the bishopric of St. David's. . . . The King gave me leave to retain the presidentship of St. John's College in my *commendam* with the bishopric. But by reason of the strictness of that statute, which I will not violate, nor my oath to it, under any colour, I am resolved before my consecration to leave it."⁴ Here, it seems, is no pluralist. But the diary also reveals that he administered his Welsh diocese from London, making only two brief visits in five years, and that concurrently with it, he was Dean of Gloucester, a prebend of Westminster, a prebend of Lincoln, and held in addition three country livings. The bulk of modern Anglo-Catholics have a sensitive conscience in regard to the cure of souls ; when they exalt Laud they must turn a blind eye to this aspect of his career. If we are to credit Laud with improving the status of Churchmen, we must pay regard exclusively to civil reputation, and not to spiritual efficiency.

The third claim made for Laud takes us into most debatable territory—that he achieved the enrichment of worship, retaining much of the Mediaeval reverential splendour, while emphatically repudiating Rome.

¹ W. Prynne, *A Breviate of the Life of William Laud*, London, 1644. p. 20.

² J. B. Mozley, *Essays Historical and Theological*, London, 1878. Vol. I, p. 125.

³ One of the charges against the Bishops in the Long Parliament was "that they had laid aside the use of *confirming* Children, though required by law." (*Cyprianus Anglicus*, p. 463.)

⁴ *Works*, iii, pp. 136-7.

This would furnish material for a monograph, rather than the few paragraphs which can here be allotted. There was no point on which Laud was more insistent at his trial than the stupidity and malice of the charge of a desire on his part to return to the Roman obedience and to take his country with him. True, he had more than once received the offer of a Cardinal's hat, but that he had quite definitely refused on the ground "that something dwelt within him, which would not suffer that, till Rome were other than it is."¹ True, also, he had discouraged the identification of the Pope with Antichrist and eschewed all provocative epithets. But what Divine of the Church of England, he asked, had ever been responsible for more conversions from Rome? Was not his conference with Fisher the Jesuit a decisive answer to the exclusive claim of the Roman See? The fact that he had repudiated Geneva was no indication of an inclination towards Rome. What right had his accusers to regard Calvin as the only genuine non-Roman? "The Catholic Church of Christ is neither Rome nor a conventicle."² Certainly Laud repudiated Rome, but this did not alter the conviction of his opponents, both English and Scottish, that his inclination was Romewards. Formally, it appeared in his constant appeal to pre-Reformation practice: materially, in the character of the innovations most closely connected with his name. These centre round the Holy Table, its place in the Church, and the reverence to be paid to it. As finally crystallised into the Canons of 1640, these seem comparatively harmless. There the position of the Communion Table is declared to be "in its own nature indifferent"; that "no religion is to be placed therein, or scruple to be made thereon." Further, this position under the East window of the Chancel "doth not imply that it is or ought to be esteemed a true and proper Altar, whereon Christ is again really sacrificed; but it is and may be called an Altar by us, in that sense which the Primitive Church called it an Altar, and no other." Further, it is to "be decently severed with rails" to save it from profanation. Yet, rails or not, liberty is preserved for the Bishop to move it during the time of celebration. Finally, the ancient custom of obeisance towards the Altar is "heartily commended to the serious consideration of all good people."³ This is the gist of what Laud induced his somewhat irregular Convocation to pass in 1640. But this was after more than twenty years of constant striving to restore the Altar, during which time his whole attitude was very different. He began in Gloucester Cathedral in 1616, the year he was appointed Dean. He ordered the Communion Table to be placed altarwise against the wall, and he required of all the Church officials, seeing they now had an Altar, to make "their humble reverence to Almighty God" as they approached it, "according

¹ *Works*, iii, 219.

² *Works*, ii, xvii.

³ *Cyprianus Anglicus*, pp. 408-9.

to the laudable custom of the Primitive times.”¹ Thenceforward he was consistent. Wherever he had, or could claim, authority, his way had to be followed. Now, since the Prayer-Book contained no hint of this, where did Laud find plausible grounds for his action? At Gloucester he seems to have adduced three: the custom of the Chapel Royal, the lay-out of some other Cathedrals, and the will of King James. When the controversy became fierce, he fell back on the Elizabethan Injunctions of 1559. Into the question of the validity of these Injunctions in the time of Charles I, there is no need to enter. Laud relied on the one for “Tables in the Church,” and stressed this clause “that the holy table in every church be decently made, and set in the place where the altar stood,”² and lightly passed over the other provisions that it was “so to stand, saving when the Communion of the Sacrament is to be administered,” and that “after the communion done, from time to time the same holy table to be placed where it stood before.”³ The more Puritan clergy naturally asked why, if Laud regarded the Injunctions as still operative, he did not enforce the whole injunction and why he ignored others like the 23rd concerning the destruction of “shrines . . . and all other monuments of idolatry and superstition . . . in walls, glass windows, or elsewhere.”⁴ The debate within the Church was bitter, and some of its incidents are best forgotten. There was no hope of an agreed Canon to Laud’s mind. So, to drive his way, he fell back on the King as Supreme Governor of the Church, and induced Charles to enter the field on his behalf. When the Canon of 1640 said that the position of the table was “in its nature indifferent” and that genuflection to it was only to be “heartily commended to serious consideration” “as an ancient and laudable custom” it was definitely resiling from Laud’s constant contention. To him it was no matter of indifference, nor was genuflection before the Altar to be pretermitted by any loyal Churchman. He had consistently directed that bodily reverence should be made towards the Altar in its restored position. In his famous speech to the Star Chamber he used an *Argumentum ad homines*. Addressing the Knights of the Garter present, he reminded them, that when, in their great solemnities, they did reverence to Almighty God, traditionally, it was “towards His Altar, as the greatest place of God’s residence on earth,” and that, by their oath (a pre-Reformation oath which had remained unchanged) they were bound to give due honour and reverence to God “and to His Altar.”⁵ And at

¹ *Cyprianus Anglicus*, p. 64.

² Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, p. 440.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 428.

⁵ *Works*, vi, pp. 56-8.

his Trial, he added, "as for the Knights of the Garter, if they might do it without superstition, I hope I and other men might do so too. Especially since they were ordered by Henry V to do it with great reverence, *ad modum sacerdotum*."¹

But beyond this solitary and dubious precedent, he had one argument that he seems to have considered unanswerable. He fell back on it at his trial. He had said, and he stood to it, that "the altar is the greatest place of God's residence on earth, greater than the pulpit, for there 'tis *Hoc est Corpus Meum*, this is My Body; but in the other it is at most but *Hoc est Verbum Meum*, This is My Word: and a greater reverence is due to the Body, than the Word, of the Lord."² Laud's notorious distrust of preaching may be responsible for this remarkable assertion; but this particular argument for the primacy of the Altar could only have cogency in the case of one who had at least drawn near to some form of the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation.

I have concentrated on this one issue, for, though only one of many, it held a dominant place in Laud's ecclesiastical activities. He repudiated Rome, certainly, but it was his concurrent repudiation of Geneva which stirred him into action. As A. C. Benson has put it, "He hated Protestantism the worse of the two, for he loved neither the soul of it nor the clothes it wore: whereas, he was well satisfied with the trappings of Romanism."³ It was his insistence on these "trappings of Romanism" that roused resistance in England; he was enforcing them with a challenged warrant; it was impossible in England to secure such a revision of Canons and Liturgy as would make his warrant unchallengeable. So he had to make shift by calling in the Church's Supreme Governor to his aid, but Charles, pliant as he was, and ready in any crisis to use his executive authority, was reluctant to widen the rift between himself and his subjects by straining that authority to cover legislation, as Laud would have wished him to do. Witness his bitter epitaph on Strafford, "He served a mild and gracious Prince, who knew not how to be, nor to be made great."⁴ If Laud's will had been so prevailing with the King, as outsiders believe it was, he would have made him great, by the full exercise of his power as "God's immediate lieutenant on earth"⁵: Laud's ideal would have been realised; the worship of the Church of England would have been enriched by a return to many mediaeval practices, and

¹ *Works*, iv, p. 206.

² *Works*, iv, p. 284.

³ A. C. Benson, *William Laud*, London, 1897. pp. 109-110.

⁴ *Works*, iii, p. 443.

⁵ *Works*, i, p. 95.

a uniformity in "the ancient and laudable customs" secured. The moment Laud was in prison, the revolt against this reform on which his heart had been set broke forth. "Reformation goes on . . . as hot as a toast" wrote an observer in London. "The Parliament men would not receive the Communion at St. Margaret's, Westminster . . . before the rails were pulled down, and the communion table was removed into the middle of the chancel."¹

So, whether or not we sympathise with the general trend of Laud's new (or rather revived) regulations for worship, the fact remains that he lacked both the general consent of the clergy and people and the unmistakable legislative authorisation which could override all opposition.

A careful study of the documents suggests that it is here—in this English situation—that we find the key to the puzzles connected with his Scottish policy.

Concerning the documents that are available for this study, there is one thing that must be said at the outset. When Laud came to his final trial before the House of Lords, all the charges that he had to meet related to his English administration. Every time his accusers adduced a Scottish instance, Laud pled the Act of Oblivion. On the ninth day, for instance, to a charge connected with an order for burning the Pacification with the Scots, he made answer, "Howsoever, this concerns the Scottish business, and therefore to the Act of Oblivion I refer myself."²

But, at the time when he was committed to prison, Laud fully expected that he would definitely be called upon to answer the charges which had been brought against him by the Scots, in the form in which these had been transmitted to the English Parliament. In consequence, he devoted a great deal of time and thought to an effective answer. And the "Troubles" part of his "Troubles and Tryal" is largely occupied with his very plausible explanation of all that had led to the regrettable uproar in the North. Historians on both sides of the Border have relied far too exclusively on this apparently sincere narrative for their reading of events. Even standard histories quote it as conclusive. But it was written years after with a view to clearing himself; and, unfortunately for Laud, contemporary documents to some extent survived, which showed that he was drawing a fancy picture, not only of the course of events, but also of his whole attitude towards the Scots. He was particularly unfortunate in that many of his "side-papers" in cipher, meant for the eye of Wentworth alone, and ordered to be consigned to the flames, have appeared in the various collections of Strafford papers.

¹ *Hist. MSS. Commission Report. Various.* ii, p. 259f.

² *Works*, iv, p. 185. (The Act referred to is the Act of Pacification and Oblivion included in the Treaty of London by which, save in the case of certain named "Incendiaries," all previous hostility was to be "reputed as if it had not been.")

A similar misfortune befell him at his trial, when he was prepared to dissociate himself from some of the least popular of the actions and utterances of his king. The original drafts of the King's speeches were found in his study at Lambeth. "I was most unfortunate," he says, "that they should be now found, and I had not left them a being, but that I verily thought I had destroyed them long since. But they were unhappily found among the heaps of my papers."¹ "I might shuffle here and deny the making of them, for no proof is offered, but that they are in my hand; and that is no necessary proof."²

It would be a useful and rewarding task for some young historian to examine Laud's answer to the Scottish charges in the light of ascertained fact. Had it been published at the time, it would not have escaped a searching scrutiny. But by 1694, when the "Troubles and Tryal" first saw the light, the Scottish interest in Laud had greatly waned, and no one seems to have thought it worth an answer. No one dreamt how much it was destined to colour the English and even the Scottish reading of the beginnings of the Covenanting struggle in days to come.

It is fitting, at this point, to illustrate this discrepancy. In his adroit defence, Laud does not conceal his conviction that the Scots were a wrong-headed and ungrateful people, but he does plausibly insinuate that the worst provocations they received were not from him, and that he was at all times a moderating influence restraining violent action against them. He shifts on to the king's shoulders responsibility for the enjoined wearing of whites,³ the removal of Church galleries to make way for altars,⁴ the final form of the Liturgy,⁵ and the Public Prayers against the Scots.⁶ And here are some of his other statements: "But as for the affairs of that Kingdom (though I had the honour to be a sworn Counsellor of that State as well as this), yet I never meddled with them, but at such time, and in such a way, as I was called and commanded by His Majesty."⁷ "I kindled no war against them, but kept it off from them as much and as long as I could."⁸ "I had no malignity answerable to their bitterness against the Church of England, nor did the 'entering upon a new war' proceed from my counsels."⁹ "I have spoken nothing of them, but in prayer, that God will be pleased to turn all these things to the good and peace of both kingdoms; which must be little less than a miracle, if he do."¹⁰ Looking back from his prison, Laud saw himself an injured innocent,

¹ *Works*, iv, p. 272.

² *Works*, iv, p. 354.

³ *Works*, iii, p. 301.

⁴ *Works*, iii, p. 314.

⁵ *Works*, iii, p. 428.

⁶ *Works*, iii, p. 371.

⁷ *Works*, iii, p. 310.

⁸ *Works*, iii, p. 361.

⁹ *Works*, iii, p. 362.

¹⁰ *Works*, iii, p. 364.

blamed for the misdeeds of others, but himself full of love and goodwill towards his alienated and misguided brethren.

But what is the evidence of his contemporary correspondence? In his "side-papers" to Wentworth, with the cipher 197 for Scotland we find a very different picture. "I think as you do, 197 (Scotland) is the veriest devil that is out of hell."¹ All the Scotch horrid business . . . will remain to posterity the foulest blot that was ever dashed upon the Protestant churches. . . . Oh, my Lord, that you knew how the King hath been used in this business: though the truth is it hath been let alone too long."² "All this hath happened by not treading out sparks before the flame broke out. Now I see no honourable way but force. . . . The King hath been shamefully betrayed in this business, and will I doubt ever be, in these half ways."³ "The want of 'thorough' in a time of opportunity is cause of all."⁴ "For their lion is *rampant*, . . . but the truth is, our lions are too *passant*."⁵ "102 (I) did constantly call upon this business, and yet could not prevail with 100 (the King)."⁶ "Vigour and order may reduce this fellow 197 (Scotland) easily. But, surely, if this summer settle not the mind of the man, it will be ill dealing with him after he have broken his chain in Bedlam."⁷ This clandestine correspondence—totally unknown to them—justifies the Scots Commissioners' impression that the blameless lamb was the main fomenter of strife. If he had had his way, Charles would have struck more quickly and more decisively. "Thorough" would have been his motto. Enough has been said to indicate that too much weight can easily be put on Laud's later recapitulation of his dealings with Scotland and his attitude to the Scottish crisis.

There is one other matter that is clear from his correspondence. He had a definite animus against Scotsmen. His pen-portraits of all the leading representatives of our nation are etched with virulence. At some point early in his career, he had acquired a complex against the whole tribe of them. Was it due to the fairy-tales with which King James regaled English audiences about the doings of Scottish Churchmen? Or, as a true-born Englishman, did he resent the presence of so many Anglified Scotsmen in the royal retinue? Or is there something more definite, of the nature of his encounters with Archie Armstrong, licensed jester first to King James, and then to his royal son? The two main ones are worth recalling. On one of Laud's first visits to the Court,

¹ *Works*, vii, p. 482.

² *Works*, vii, pp. 453-4.

³ *Works*, vii, p. 468.

⁴ *Works*, vii, p. 469, cf. pp. 493 and 426.

⁵ *Works*, vii, p. 502.

⁶ *Works*, vii, p. 490.

⁷ *Works*, vii, p. 537.

Archie Armstrong was ordered to say grace at the royal table. This he did in these words: "All praise to God, and little Laud to the deil." The other is later, and has sounder contemporary evidence. On his way into the first Privy Council meeting after word had come of the National Covenant, Archie Armstrong met Laud and said: "News from Scotland, your Grace, who is the fool now?" Laud felt that this was overstepping even the Jester's privilege. So he was at once brought before the Council, and it was solemnly ordered "by His Majesty, with the advice of the Board, that the Jester should have his coat pulled over his head, and be discharged from the King's service, and banished the Court," as is recorded in the Privy Council Register for March 11, 1638.

However early and unpleasant his encounters with Scotsmen may have been, Laud did not make his first contact with Scotland itself until 1617 when, as a junior ecclesiastical adviser, he accompanied King James in his only visit to his earliest subjects. This brief visit, from which he returned some time before the main party, receives practically no mention at all in his Diary, or any extant writing. But his later chaplain, Dr. Heylin, has thus noted its main feature. The King had barely reached Edinburgh "when the Presbyters, conceiving that his coming was upon design to work an Uniformity between the Churches of both Kingdoms, set up one Struthers to preach against it, who laid so lustily about him in the chief Church of Edinburgh, that he not only condemned the *rites* and *ceremonies* of the Church of *England*, but prayed God to save *Scotland* from the same. Laud, and the rest of the Chaplains who had heard the sermon, acquainted His Majesty with those passages; but there was no remedy."¹ Now, it does seem strange that the Scottish Church should have commissioned or permitted a tactless extremist to welcome the royal party in this brusque fashion. From Presbyterian sources, it is just the opposite grumble that is heard. Wm. Struthers of St. Giles was regarded as a renegade, one who, from being a bitter enemy of the Bishops, had degenerated into a royal pensioner and an apert of English ways. Calderwood never mentions him without some word of contempt. And here is his account of the King's first Sundays in Edinburgh. On the first Sunday, "in the Great Kirk, the Bishop of St. Androes had a flattering sermone upon the 21st Psalme."² And, on the second Sunday in Edinburgh "Mr William Struthers, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, preached this day in the chapell before the King, and observed the English forme in his prayer and behaviour."³ Heylin almost makes one

¹ *Cyprianus Anglicus*, p. 68.

² D. Calderwood: *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1842ff. vii, p. 246.

³ *Ibid.*, vii, p. 247.

share Laud's disgust with the bad manners of the Scottish pulpit. But, reading Struthers' record, one is forced to ask, "What did Laud expect of the Scottish Church, when one of its leading and most anglicised ministers, doing his best to please his distinguished audience, is regarded as laying lustily about him against the whole Anglican position?" Heylin also tells us that the King failed in the main object of his visit—to introduce the 5 Articles (which the following year became known as the 5 Articles of Perth) into the Scottish Church despite his blunt assertion at St. Andrews "that it was a Power belonging to all Christian Princes to order matters in the Church¹; but, he adds triumphantly, the failure was not for long, for "His Majesty therefor took a better course, than to put the point to Argument and Disputation; which was to beat them by the Belly, and to withdraw those Augmentations which he had formerly allowed them out of his Exchequer: which Pill so wrought upon this indigent and obstinate People, that the next year . . . they passed the five Articles for which His Majesty had been courting them for two years together."² This comment illustrates the fact that Heylin was not an inapt pupil of the devoted believer in *praemium* and *poena* as instruments in promoting ecclesiastical obedience. There can be little doubt that Laud was not impressed with the comparatively cautious ways of King James in proceeding to his goal of conforming the Church of Scotland as closely as possible to that of England, for there is no real reason to doubt the story which Bishop Hacket told in his original unabridged biography of Archbishop Williams. Williams at that time a Bishop, for ends of his own was pleading with the King that it was high time that Laud was raised to a Bishopric. He was met with a definite refusal for which, after some parleying, the royal reasons were given: "the plain truth is I keep Laud back from all place of rule and authority because I find he hath a restless spirit and cannot see when matters are well, but loves to toss and change, and to bring things to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain, which may endanger the steadfastness of that which, God be praised, is at a good pass. I speak not at random; he hath made himself known to me to be such an one. For when, three years past, I had obtained of the Assembly of Perth to consent to five articles of order and decency in a correspondence with this Church of England, I gave them promise that I would try their obedience no further anent ecclesiastical affairs. Yet this man hath pressed me to invite them to a nearer conjunction with the Liturgy and Canons of this nation; but I sent him back with the frivolous draft that he had drawn."³ This would indicate

¹ *Cyprianus Anglicus*, p. 68.

² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³ Hacket: *Scrinia Reserata*, Memorial of Archbishop Williams, p. 64.

that Laud was busying himself in drawing up Canons and Liturgy for Scotland before 1621, that is to say, eight years previous to that call from Bishop Maxwell of Ross which he would have us believe was the beginning of his concern for that country.¹

It is pertinent here to recall that the Scottish Church had already been taking steps to review its constitution and its worship. Indeed, the revision of Knox's liturgy, commissioned by the General Assembly of 1616,² had already been completed; its nature and its history can readily be gathered from G. W. Sprott's admirable edition. The same Assembly had resolved that there be "ane uniforme ordour of Church discipline, and to that effect . . . a Booke of Canons be made . . . drawin foorth of the bookis of former Assemblies."³ What progress was made with this remit we cannot tell. It was certainly never submitted to the special Commission appointed to deal with it, and Scot of Cupar (himself a member) doubted if any such book had been drawn up "by those to whom it was committed."⁴ But it seems from the proceedings of the Privy Council in 1618 that a draft had been before the Perth Assembly of that year.

It would appear, therefore, that at the time of the accession of Charles, two similar or dissimilar schemes were in existence for the drawing nearer of the two Churches, one with both its feet planted in the Scottish tradition, and the other the work of a dominant spirit outside that tradition.

It would be quite impossible within the limits of this paper to recount the whole story of the negotiations which ended in the imposition of the Canons of 1636 and the Liturgy of 1637; its special purpose is to examine certain current conceptions of the part played in them by Laud, and to lay bare, if possible, the motives which animated him throughout.

Dr. Cooper, among many others, will have it that Laud's Liturgy is a misnomer, and that the responsibility or the credit for that production belongs to the younger Scottish Bishops.⁵ He accepts Laud's apologetic reconstruction throughout and particularly his claim that he had "laboured to have the English Liturgy sent" to the Scots "without any omission or addition at all," and that "some of the Scottish bishops prevailed herein against him."⁶ It is remarkable that Laud does not attempt to evade responsibility for the Canons, which have attracted fewer defenders

¹ *Works*, iii, 427.

² *The Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland* (Bannatyne Club edition); Edinburgh, 1839ff, iii, p. 1123.

³ *Ibid*, iii, p. 1128.

⁴ W. Scot. *Apologetical Narration*, Edinburgh, 1846. p. 245.

⁵ J. Cooper: *The Scottish Liturgy*, 1637, esp. pp. xiv-xx.

⁶ *Works*, iii, p. 356.

than the Liturgy. In their case he admits that the Scottish Church had made a sound beginning, that the Bishop of Ross brought a copy¹ to him, with blank pages for corrections and additions, that he had to put all in better order, which was no censurable crime. And whatever they of Scotland think, that Church did then need many things to be put in better order, and at this day need many more."² He admitted, further, that he had added one Canon at the last moment, that he had definitely changed some others as out of harmony with the teaching and practice of the Church of England,³ and that the 4th Canon of Chapter viii did "stand behind the curtain" and is "to be printed fully, as one that was to be most useful."⁴ He admitted finally that he had changed the title from "Canons agreed to be proponed to Synods" to Canons "ordained to be observed by the Clergy," endeavouring, however, to explain away the implications of this change. That is to say, he defends the Canons as originally of Scottish provenance, but soundly revised and supplemented by himself and the Bishop of London; and does not even wholly evade responsibility for the method of their introduction.

As for the Liturgy, however, his claim was that he wanted the English one as it stood; it was the Scottish Prelates who were responsible for any change, implying thereby for the specific changes which had roused the people. What plausibility there is in this statement comes from the suppression of material facts. Laud gives no hint anywhere that when Bishop Maxwell visited him, he came with the Liturgy prepared contemporaneously with the Canons, brought up to date as its prayer for the Royal family proves.⁵ It was for this amended version of Knox's liturgy that the Scottish Bishops sought the approval of Charles, certain that it would have had the benediction of his father.⁶ It was at this juncture that Laud persuaded the King to insist on the English Liturgy, as much preferable to these meagre and beggarly rudiments; and at

¹ It is evident that these draft Canons were not compiled according to the formula of the General Assembly of 1616; even in their first draft they must have borne a closer relation to the English Canons of 1604 than to excerpts from Acts of the General Assemblies.

² *Works*, iii, p. 318.

³ *Works*, iii, pp. 327, 330, 332.

⁴ *Works*, iii, pp. 321-2.

⁵ G. W. Sprott: *Scottish Liturgies of the Reign of James Sixth*, Edinburgh, 1871. pp. 25, 95.

⁶ *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, Edinburgh, 1841f. i, p. 444. From a paper drawn up by the Earl of Stirling in which he records that "this very Booke *in statu quo* King James left it, was sent to his Ma, and presented to his Ma, by myselfe (whether the same was done or not by the B. of Ross . . . I darre not confidently averre, but I think hee it was)."

that time the Scottish Bishops intimated that they, on their part, were not prepared to go further than they had gone.

For four years, matters were at a standstill. Then came in 1633 the visit of Charles I to Scotland for his coronation, with Laud as his ecclesiastical adviser and master of ceremonies. From the meagre notes in his diary we gather that he came to regard the very country with aversion, e.g., "July 8, Monday (from Perth) to Dumblain and Stirling, my dangerous and cruel journey crossing part of the Hilands by Coach, which was a wonder there."¹

It is evident that, during this visit, Laud had many talks with the Scottish Bishops, in which the latter made it clear "that they would be better pleased to have a Liturgie of their own, but such as should come near the English both in Form and Matter."² That is to say, they requested in effect that they should be allowed to take their own production as a basis, and make some further amendments on it. To this request, both Charles and Laud refused to listen; and on their return to England Laud began his campaign in the King's name. Pending a final settlement, the use of the English Liturgy was to be extended in Scotland. It had already been observed at least in part in the Chapel Royal at Holyrood; henceforward it was to be used without deviation or diminution;³ attendance there once a year at a full Anglican Communion was enjoined on an enlarging circle of those in official positions in Scotland.⁴ Non-conforming officials were to be punished.⁵ Finally, in October, 1634, its use was enjoined in "Cathedral Churches on all holydays," and twice a day in all Episcopal households.⁶

Laud's great trouble in this business was to find willing agents. Spottiswoode, the Primate and Chancellor, proved a broken reed; he was too deeply attached to the Scottish tradition; Bellenden, Dean of the Chapel Royal, was the recipient of more than one sharp reminder that promotion depended on his full obedience. His Majesty "commanded me to write expressly to you, that he did not take it well that, contrary to his express command, you had omitted prayers in his Chappell Royall, according to the English Liturgie; with some other omissions there, which pleased him not";⁷ the only fairly reliable ally was Bishop Maxwell of Ross. Up to the time of the promulgation of the Canons, Maxwell showed himself all that Laud could desire in a Scottish colleague. Even when the first amendments to the English Liturgy proved to be completely away from the Scottish direction, he was still amenable.

¹ Prynn: *Breviate*, p. 18.

³ Baillie, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 431-2.

⁵ *Works*, vi, p. 395; iv, p. 305.

⁷ Baillie: *op. cit.*, i, p. 432.

² *Cyprianus Anglicus*, p. 222.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 423, 433, 436.

⁶ Sprott: *op. cit.*, p. xlix.

But it is evident that there were changes which stuck in his throat. So Laud had to fall back on his solitary whole-hearted supporter, that James Wedderburn, who, having spent over twelve years in Laudian circles in England, was sent back to Scotland in 1635 as Bishop of Dunblane and Dean of the Chapel Royal. Laud commended him to Bishop Maxwell as "very able to do service and will certainly do it, if you can keep up his heart"¹ showing already how conscious he was, that Wedderburn would find himself depressed by lack of support. As Dean he had instructions to stick at nothing,² and was assured that the King would reward fervent loyalty with quick promotion.³ In him Laud had an agent entirely to his mind. Baillie calls him "a man sett in the Chappell to be a hand to Canterburie in all his intentions."⁴ The correspondence between the two reveals their essential kinship. The significant details at which Maxwell scrupled rejoiced the heart of Wedderburn. Hence the final instructions about the printing of the Liturgy ran thus: "So in the printing of your Liturgy you are to follow the book which my Lord Ross brought, *and the additions* which are made to the book I now send. But if you find the book of my Lord Ross's and this, to differ in anything that is material, there you are to follow this later book I now send, as expressing some things more fully."⁵ In his elaborate defence, Laud claimed that he was not responsible for the method of introducing the book—by royal mandate—that, on the contrary he had left the Scottish prelates to do so according to the laws and customs of their church.⁶ And yet this same letter to Wedderburn contains this final paragraph: "In His Majesty's authorising of the notes in this book prefixed at the beginning of it, though he leave a liberty to my Lord the Archbishop of St. Andrewes, and brethren the Bishops who are upon the place, upon apparent reason to vary some things; yet you must know, and inform them, that His Majesty having viewed all these additions, hopes that there will be no need of change of anything, and will be best pleased with little or rather no alteration."⁷

Thus the final form of the Liturgy would come as a surprise even to the Bishop of Ross; Canterbury and Dunblane—with the possible exceptions of King Charles and Bishop Wren—were the only two who knew precisely what to expect. There is no evading the conclusion that Laud used Wedderburn to revise the English Liturgy in a ritualistic direction, endeavouring to get behind the Elizabethan Compromise to the First Prayer-Book of King Edward VI, and in points, behind even that, to mediaeval practice. "These variations were taken, either, from the first

¹ *Works*, vi, 434.

³ *Works*, vi, 434.

⁵ *Works*, vi, p. 456.

⁷ *Works*, vi, p. 459.

² Baillie, *op. cit.*, i, p. 436.

⁴ Baillie, *op. cit.*, i, p. 168.

⁶ *Works*, iii, p. 336.

book of Edward VI, which was not popery; or from some ancient Liturgies which savoured not of popery."¹

Was there, then, no attempt to meet genuine Scottish wishes? Apart from the partial but incomplete discarding of lessons from the Apocrypha, I can find no trace of any. The one that is constantly cited is the substitution of Presbyter for Priest throughout. Before this is accepted, a closer scrutiny must be given to the actual changes made in the current Prayer-Book of England, that of 1604. Priest is not the uniform name for the officiating clergyman in that book. It is used, it is true, 55 times, and is always in the Scottish Liturgy replaced by Presbyter. But the word Minister is used 92 times, and it is replaced 53 times by Presbyter, and 39 times by Presbyter or Minister. Quite evidently Laud had seized the opportunity afforded by the Scottish dislike of the name Priest to get rid of that other name so favoured by the Puritans and, therefore, so obnoxious to his ears "minister." And to one of his school of thought it mattered little whether the displacing word was "Presbyter" or "Priest." To him, as to Milton, though for a different reason, presbyter was but priest writ large. I cannot find a single expression in the book that Laud would not have been willing to sponsor for England.

Next, it is to be noted that although Laud, in view of the disastrous failure of the Book in Scotland, made an elaborate attempt to shift the responsibility on to Scottish shoulders, he never attempted to conceal his admiration for what he was pleased to call *their* work. One of the last tasks that he undertook was a translation of it into Latin, prepared in order that the learned world throughout Europe might fully appreciate its quality. He upheld it, on every point, and at times with cogency and pungency against every definite Scottish challenge. Here are some of his pronouncements: "I like the book exceedingly well, and hope I shall be able to maintain anything that is in it."² "That Kingdom (has lost) such a form of God's service, as I fear they will never come near again."³ "Though I shall not find fault with the order of the prayers, as they stand in the Communion-book of England (for, God be thanked, 'tis well); yet, if a comparison must be made, I do think the order of the prayers, as now they stand in the Scottish Liturgy, to be the better, and more agreeable to use in the primitive Church."⁴ "'Tis true, this passage is not in the Prayer of Consecration in the Service-book of England; but I wish with all my heart it were. For though the consecration of the elements may be without it, yet it is much more solemn and

¹ *Works*, iii, p. 341.

² *Works*, iii, p. 335.

³ *Works*, iii, p. 278.

⁴ *Works*, iii, p. 344.

full by that invocation.”¹ “As for ‘the oblation of the elements,’ that is fit and proper; and I am sorry, for my part, that it is not in the Book of England.”² He makes it clear that while disclaiming authorship he is prepared to defend every jot and tittle of the alterations on the merits. This is even more evident in the “side-papers” to Strafford, to which reference has already been made. Here the Liturgy is referred to as the “*summum bonum*,” containing some differences from the English, and “those well-weighed.”³ “It troubles me too, and I believe as much as any man, that that which might have been *summum bonum* hath been so shamelessly lost in 1577 (Scotland), and we are now glad of *minus malum*, which is the choice which necessity allows and no better.”⁴ No more need be adduced to prove that Laud thought of the Scottish Liturgy (however reluctant he was to admit any real share in its preparation) as the best conceivable liturgy for that day and generation.

Now, where does all this lead? Can we believe that Laud having seen a *summum bonum* set up in Scotland was going to rest content with a *minus bonum* for England? Can we believe that England was not Laud’s main objective? Recall his situation. Labouring incessantly for certain reforms of worship in England, he is hampered at every turn by recalcitrants challenging the adequacy of his authority for them. In the heat of parties in England, with so many still Abbott’s men, there is no chance of Canons or Liturgy being amended to Laud’s mind. Nor can he dare to stretch the Royal prerogative any further. Is there any way out? Did Laud in this dilemma see a glimmer of hope by way of Scotland? Did he recall these words of King James at St. Andrews about the “power belonging to all Christian princes to order matters in the Church?” Could not the Church of Scotland be reformed by this method, and then a loud call to Uniformity with this remodelled Scottish Church become the slogan of his party? This is the one explanation that seems to fit all the facts. It gives the Canon which “stands behind the curtain” its function “as one that was to be most useful.” What worried Scotsmen about the Canon was that it took all initiative and power from the Courts of the Church, and left the King free to bring in what innovations he chose; what pleased Laud about it was that, once Canons and Liturgy had been established by that power to order matters in the Church which belonged to the Christian prince, no alteration of any kind could be made apart from him. “Forasmuch,” it runs, “as no reformation in doctrine or discipline can be made perfect at once in any church, therefore it shall and may be lawful for the Church of Scotland at any time to make remonstrance to His Majesty, or his successors, what they

¹ *Works*, iii, p. 354.

² *Works*, iii, p. 359.

³ *Works*, vii, p. 373.

⁴ *Works*, vii, p. 507.

conceive fit to be taken in further consideration in and concerning the premises. And if the King shall thereupon declare his liking and approbation, then both clergy and lay shall yield their obedience, without incurring the censure aforesaid or any other. But it shall not be lawful for the bishops themselves, in a national synod or otherwise, to alter any rubric, article, canon, doctrinal or disciplinary, whatsoever, under the pain above mentioned, and His Majesty's further displeasure."¹ With this canon once accepted, the liturgy of his dreams might be established and stabilised in Scotland; England, impressed by the sheer merit of that Liturgy, could easily be induced to conform. Most historians, in concentrating on Laud's conceivable aims for Scotland, have lost sight of his ultimate aim. Scotland only came into the picture at all as a possible strategic base for ending the deadlock in England, and bringing victory to his hard-pressed henchmen.

It may be asked, why has this reading of Laud's intervention in Scotland not been suggested before? The answer is that it was, though the fact seems to have been overlooked. The Scottish Commissioners who brought the original charges against Laud, through Adam Blair their clerk, transmitted to the English Parliament a supplementary list in which the English Prelates in general were conjoined with Laud. A main part of this second document reads thus: "It hath come to pass of late that the prelates of England, having prevailed and brought us to subjection in point of government, and finding their long-awaited-for opportunity and a rare congruity of many spirits and powers ready to co-operate for their ends, have made a strong assault upon the whole external worship and doctrine of our Kirk. By this their doing they did not aim to make us conform to England, but to make Scotland first (whose weakness in resisting they had before experienced in novations of government and of some points of worship), and thereafter England, conform to Rome, even in those matters wherein England had separated from Rome ever since the time of Reformation."² In his answer Laud naturally fastens on the phrase, "conform to Rome," which he asserts is a manifest and "monstrous untruth" "considering what the Bishops of England have written in defence of their Reformation against Rome, and how far beyond anything which the presbyters of Scotland have written against it."³ But if the Scottish commissioners had avoided this unfortunate phrase and said "return to mediaeval practice even in points deliberately discarded at the Reformation," Laud would have found himself hard put to it to find any answer. Indeed, had he not been a prisoner in danger of his life, I do not think he would have at-

¹ *Works*, v. p. 596.

² *Works*, iii, pp. 380-1.

³ *Works*, iii, p. 381.

tempted an answer. He would have acknowledged the justice of the charge, and gloried in it, lamenting only the failure of the plan. *Summum bonum* for England—the restoration of priestly rites and ancient values—was to come through that *summum bonum* attained in Scotland. It is the wreckage of this great scheme that explains Laud's bitter exasperation with the Scots. It was not that by their determined obstinacy they had missed a good thing for themselves; they had ruined the golden dream for England which it was his dearest ambition to achieve.

The elements in the resistance which the fateful plan encountered have often been analysed. There was the selfish fear of not a few, resenting the royal plans for restitution of some of the ancient patrimony; there was an early stirring of Scottish nationalism, lamenting the unexpected results of the transference of the Scottish line to the Southern capital; there was a notable recrudescence of Presbyterian fervour, suppressed and driven into the solitudes for well-nigh a generation. But neither selfish, nor patriotic, nor ecclesiastical interests—no, nor all combined—can account for the quality of that resistance. Fundamentally it was religious. It was a definite concern for the gains of the Reformation, and at the heart of it, for one particular element in that gain. This was the elevation of the Lord's Supper in its simplicities to be the spiritual sustenance of the believing community: "We affirme," says the Scots Confession, "that the faithfull in the rycht use of the Lordis Table hes sick conjunctioun with Christ Jesus, as the naturall man can not comprehend"¹: and teachers like Robert Bruce had led the common man at the Table to know his Redeemer near and his redemption sure. It is this that has led Lord Eustace Percy to label the Scottish Church as "in the strict sense of the term, a Eucharistic Church."² In England, many had thought that if they took the Mass, and washed its face, and taught it English, it could be received into good society; in Scotland, it was the irredeemable degradation of the Sacrament in the Mass that moved the Lords of the Congregation. "Secondlie," so ran their official supplication to the Parliament of 1560, "seing that the Sacramentis of Jesus Chryst are maist schamefullie abusit and prophanit by that Romane harlot and hir sworne vassallis."³ A fully restored Sacrament, in which as they conceived it no tradition of man was to be found, had, for three generations, been the living nerve and centre of Scottish religion. And now, here was Laud, with his Altar, and a Presbyter turning his back on the people, and mumbling prayers, and using old formulae in translation! Whether the words were ever spoken or not, the traditional "Fause

¹ *The Works of John Knox*, ed. David Laing. Edinburgh, 1846ff. ii, p. 115.

² Lord Eustace Percy: *John Knox*; London, 1937. p. 65.

³ Laing's *Knox*, ii, p. 90.

loon, dost thou daur say Mass at ma lug," fitly sums up the Scottish feeling. This was the road back to Rome. It was to imperil all that had been won. And while liturgists may defend everything in word and rubric in the Communion Service of the Prayer-Book of 1637 as sound and traditional and admirable, I hold that the Scottish Church would have lost infinitely more by its acceptance than they might conceivably have gained.

Laud never knew the extent of his offence. His was a one-track mind. He could enter into no tradition save his own ; and, all unwittingly, he had threatened another tradition, prized beyond price by a host of believing souls, and already deeply embedded in the heart of a people. Hence Scotland, as a base of operations for a decisive victory in divided England, proved a delusion and a snare ; and his attempt to establish it sealed his doom.